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LIGHTHOUSE LEM;

OR,

THE MYSTERY OF DEADMAN'S REEF.

By AN OLD SEA CAPTAIN.

CHAPTER I.

DEADMAN'S REEF AND ITS LIGHTHOUSE.

THERE is a dangerous sunken reef on our Atlantic seaboard, somewhere between Montauk and Portsmouth, the exact place being a matter of no particular importance to the interest of our story, which, from the frequent loss of life there, is called Deadman's Reef; but one case, more than all the rest, has given it this forbidding name, and it is with this case, and the mystery thereto associated, together with numerous complications growing out of it, that our story has to deal.

Not far from this reef, and in fact, extending into the sea beyond it, is a point of land, on the extreme end of which is a lighthouse called Loring's Light, from the name of a former keeper, the sudden and mysterious death of whom is the one referred to above.

In rounding this point, Sharkfin point, so called, vessels were formerly very apt to run upon Deadman's Reef, which rarely shows above the water, even at low tide; and for the sake of warning them of the danger, Loring's Light was built, the loss of life and property preceding that time being something enormous; and, indeed, it is not inconsiderable at the present writing.

The keeper of the light at the date of our story was a boy or young man about eighteen, Lemuel Loring by name, though usually known as Lighthouse Lem, the son of the man whose strange death we have spoken of; and although a mere boy in years, was a man in spirit, strength and determination, and as brave, honest and generous as was ever created.

One day, about two years previous, when Lem was but sixteen, his father was missing, and the story went that, having caused the wreck of a noble ship the previous night through carelessness, he had rowed out directly over Deadman's Reef and committed suicide by drowning, being afraid of hearing the reproaches of his fellow-townsmen.

The boat was found bottom up on the reef at low tide, the morning after the wreck, and floating in the water near it were Loring's coat and sou'-wester. The strangest part of the affair, however, was that, under the boat, surrounded by a chain that kept the former in place, lying under the water, was the body of the dead lighthouse-keeper, totally bereft of clothing, and the head and face so eaten by fish—sharks, doubtless—as to be entirely unrecognizable.

No one doubted for an instant that the man had killed himself to escape the wrath of the owners of the *Vesper Bell*, the ship in question; and indeed, they endeavored to seize the man's property to partially indemnify themselves, and were about succeeding when Lem came forward and promised that if they would give him time, he would re-

pay them out of his own earnings. The money was needed, just then, he said, to defray the expenses of his father's funeral, and for some necessary repairs to the light.

So, from the day of the wreck of the *Bell*, dated Lem's custody of the light. His father was buried in a quiet corner of the quaint old church-yard, where his mother already lay, and Lem took up his abode in the lighthouse, where he performed invaluable service, and won the esteem of every coaster-captain from Portland to Pensacola.

Lem would never admit that the wreck of the *Bell* was due to his father's carelessness, and the story he told to a few confidential friends, was this:

Just before the wreck, he was hastening along the rough path leading to the lighthouse, the same being entirely covered at rare times; when, looking up for the first time, he beheld, to his horror, that the light was extinguished, and just outside, he could see a vessel tossing upon the waves, in imminent peril of running upon the reef, unless the warning light could be displayed.

With but one thought in his mind, he fairly flew over the rough stones, and reaching the house, found that the outer door was wide open. Attaching no importance to this fact, at the time, and not remembering it until long afterwards, he darted in and called loudly for his father, meeting with no response. Then he hurried up stairs, and in the light tower, in front of the extinguished lamps, he found the object of his search, lying unconscious, with an empty bottle by his side.

After a long time, he succeeded in arousing the man, who explained that he must have been struck by a gull, which, flying headlong toward the light, had broken through the heavy plate glass panes and dashed against his head. The dead body of the gull was found, later on, but many feet away from where Loring had fallen, and almost everyone said that the man had got drunk, and neglecting to replenish the oil in the lamps, they had gone out; and this story was generally believed, in spite of Lem's protest that his father never drank, and that the bottle must have been put where it was found, by an enemy.

The lights were quickly flashing out their warning across the turbulent and angry waves, which dashed high up against the rocks, scattering the spray in blinding showers; but it was too late, for the *Vesper Bell* had struck upon a jagged rock, unseen amid the darkness, and the light served only to show her battered hull, already fast breaking up.

Loring hurried out into the night, and that was the last that was ever seen of him alive. The story traveled far and wide, and for many months Deadman's Reef and Loring's Light were associated with the wreck of the *Bell* in a manner that reflected no credit upon the keeper; and there were not lacking those who were willing to swear that

Loring had intentionally caused the wreck, and for a long time many captains would prefer losing many hours' valuable time rather than pass Sharkfin Point and Deadman's Reef in the night.

In the course of two years Lem had shown himself so brave and unflinching, so firm in doing his duty at whatever cost, that the good name of the light was restored, though the wreck of the *Vesper Bell* and the strange mystery of Loring's death were not forgotten, and the dead keeper still bore the odium, despite the living keeper's manly efforts to prevent any further catastrophe.

This, then, is the history of Deadman's Reef and Loring's Light previous to the beginning of our story, and the continuance of that history will be found no less interesting.

Late one wild September afternoon, the weather being threatening, Lem was returning from the village with some purchases, including a few books, when he met a man called Tim Brace, who bore an unenviable reputation in the town, it being secretly reported that he was the leader of a band of wreckers; not legitimate wreckers, be it understood, but men who caused the destruction of vessels by placing false lights on the coast and resorting to other fiendish tricks to accomplish their ends.

Lem nodded to the man, who passed hurriedly by, blowing out a cloud of the vilest tobacco smoke, and grumbling a surly acknowledgment of Lem's nod.

The young keeper threw his purchases upon the table in the main room of the house, and locking the outside door went above to light up; returning after his task was accomplished, he busied himself getting his supper, and then when he had eaten, sat down to read. The very first book he took up had these startling words written across the fly-leaf:

"Beware of Tim Brace. He means mischief, and to-night."

CHAPTER II.

LEM OVERHEARS PORTIONS OF A PLOT, AND IS PUT OFF HIS GUARD.

LEM was too astonished to speak, and he sat gazing at the written warning for many minutes, utterly unable to comprehend who could have written those strange words.

The door was still locked, and he knew there was nobody in the house when he entered, as it was next to impossible to get in when the door was fastened. He knew that no one in the store could have written the warning, for he had examined the fly-leaves of the book himself, before wrapping it up in order to put his name on it.

There was only one explanation possible, and that was that somebody had written in the book while he was up stairs; but how this could be, was so inexplicable to the boy that he soon gave up thinking upon it, and turned his attention to the more important side of the question.

What mischief was Tim Brace up to, and why had he been warned to look out for him, or rather to beware of him? Did the man mean mischief to him—and, if so, what was its nature? Lem could think of no reason why Brace should harm him, and so he presently gave up trying to solve that part of the question, resolving to be on the watch, and if the man attempted to play any tricks, to thwart him.

About an hour afterwards he was going up to look out at the night, and had paused at a little window half-way up the tower, which was open to admit the air, when he fancied he heard voices. Putting his head out carefully, he was in time to hear a man say, standing at the base of the tower:

"All right, Tim, I'll get him out; and while I'm seeing to him, you'll fix the light, I suppose?"

"Yes, I'll attend to that. He doesn't like me over well, and wouldn't be pleased to see me, I don't believe," answered another, in whom Lem recognized Tim

Brace, the first speaker being a man called Ham Dalton, a notorious vagabond.

Lem listened for any further remarks the men might make, but they moved off just then, and in a few moments he heard a vigorous pounding at the front door, which was built high, and was approached by a flight of stone steps, with an iron hand-rail on either side, the water sometimes reaching to the second step from the top, and making such a contrivance necessary.

Lem opened a window in the little room over the main room, from which the door could be seen, and called out to know what was wanted.

"Deekin Thorne is taken very sick, Lem," said Ham Dalton, "and he wants to see you right bad. They're 'fraid he won't hold out till mornin'."

Now, Deacon Thorne was the father of pretty Maggie Thorne, a young lady of the village, whom Lem particularly liked, and who reciprocated his affection; and, indeed, it was whispered by Dame Rumor, a lady who talks about everybody's affairs but her own, that some day there would be a match between the handsome lighthouse keeper and the blooming Maggie.

Lem had seen the deacon that very afternoon at the village store, and he had seemed to be in such unusual health that the boy thought it strange he should be taken sick so suddenly, until he remembered the mysterious warning, and came at once to the conclusion that the two men were in league against him, but for what purpose he could not imagine.

"Is that so?" he asked. "I am very sorry to hear it."

"Yes; and he wants to see you awful bad; so does Maggie."

"I admire Miss Thorne's taste in most things, but I should have thought she would be more particular in the selection of a messenger," returned Lem, dryly.

"Oh, I know I ain't of no account, but I was the only person that could be spared."

"We could all spare you, for that matter, and never miss you," returned Lem, in the same imperturbable manner.

"The poor fund would be richer, too, if you were out of the way, I fancy."

"Oh, you can joke at my expense if you like, and it's about all you kin do at it; but I should think you'd want to go right off, after they've sent a man clear way off so fur after ye, and sich a bad night, too; the wind's a howlin' like mad, and I'm most friz up, if it is September. Oohoo!" and the man danced about like a lunatic, slapping his hands against his sides to warm himself.

"How can I go and leave the lights?" asked Lem. "You know I'm all alone here till morning."

"Oh, I'll stay and see to the lights till you get back, if that's all that hinders you," answered Ham, quickly, chuckling to himself at the speedy success of his plan.

Lem's next words, however, put a damper upon his feelings.

"No, I wouldn't trust you. I am afraid you'd drink up all the oil. They say you'll drink anything in the world except water, and you wouldn't drink that for a farm."

"Ha-ha! you're pretty funny, but all this time the deekin is took to his bed, and a askin' fur ye, and ye don't come, and bumbye somebody will get the sack from a gal called Maggie, and then won't he be sorry?"

"You run back, Ham, and see if he is any worse, and if he is, I'll go with you, provided——" but the window closing at that moment left Ham in doubt as to what the provision might be.

"'Twon't work for a cent, Tim," he said to that worthy, upon rejoining him at a point some distance from the house.

"We must contrive some way to get him out," growled Tim Brace. "The *Daisy* will be along here pretty soon, and I know she don't know the way."

"No, you're right, she don't; got Sam Hendricks for capen, and he don't know nothin'. With that light put

out, she'd go smack on to the Deadman, and there'd be a bully good haul for us."

"You bet, and it only wants an hour by my calculations for her to be roundin' the pint. She's got a good 'un aboard in the way o' cargo, and we must have it. Come down the road a bit till I think up something."

The two men moved off in the darkness, talking earnestly, and when Lem went to the window shortly afterward, he could see nothing of them, and he judged that they had abandoned their plan of getting him out, as a bad job.

An hour afterward he sat reading his book, which was a history of notable lighthouses, when he was suddenly brought to his feet by hearing a cry for help from outside, in the tones of a woman!

He listened a moment, and then recognized the voice as that of Maggie Thorne, his sweetheart.

CHAPTER III.

SHOWING HOW THE PLOTTERS ARE FOILED AND A WRECK IS AVERTED.

QUICKER than thought Lem rushed to the door, threw it wide open, and sprang out into the darkness, thinking nothing of his warning, but only knowing that Maggie was in danger, and needed the help of his strong right arm!

He ran down the steps toward where he could see a woman struggling with two stalwart ruffians. As he dashed across the rocky interval he did not observe that two men sneaked quickly up the steps with the intention of entering the open door.

He had almost reached Maggie when two more men sprang up, and seizing him tightly around the waist, pinning his arms to his sides, threw a heavy cloak over his head, and stifled his cries. He resisted manfully, but to no purpose, and one of the men dealt him a blow upon the head which completely stunned him, and caused him to fall back heavily into the other's arms.

Maggie's cries were quickly hushed, also, and one of the men—all of whom were masked—led her off into the bushes, where he left her bound, blindfolded and utterly helpless.

Meanwhile, the light was still shining across the troubled waters, and the men advanced to the lighthouse to see why Tim Brace had not done as he said he would. They were met halfway by the very man himself, who was swearing furiously.

"Confound the luck," he said, savagely. "Toby and I were just on the p'int o' goin' in, when that blessed door come to with a thunderin' bang, right in our faces, nearly knockin' me over."

"Did the wind do it?" asked Ham, who was one of the party, and wore a black mask.

"Wind! No, wind be smothered, there wasn't no wind there. Somebody pushed it."

"There warn't no one to push it. Didn't he tell me he were all alone. What are you trying to choke us with?"

"There's no time to lose," snarled Tim; "search the beggar's pockets and get his key. We must get in."

One or two of the gang, there being about eight in all, went to where Lem was lying, still unconscious, and hunted through his pockets for the key of the door; in a few minutes they announced that that the search was fruitless.

"Could the imp have pulled the door to behind him?" asked one of the crowd.

"No—no, he didn't," responded Toby, impatiently; "me and Tim seen the hull bizness; the door banged to of itself, and then there was a laugh, sort of, at least I thought so, just as if the door was mocking at us, fur not gettin' in."

"Look there, boys—look there!" said Tim, suddenly pointing out to sea. "We're too late, for there's the *Daisy* coming around the point like a lady. Curse that miserable light, I say!"

The men all looked in the direction indicated, and there, indeed, they saw a handsome, three-masted schooner, under almost full sail, sweeping majestically around the point, in the strong glare of Loring's Light, steering carefully clear of all the dangerous points, and sailing by swiftly at a safe distance from Deadman's Reef.

She passed through the long track of light thrown over the sea by the faithful guide high above her, but in a moment the moon emerged from a bank of clouds, and showed her pursuing her journey safe and sound, while the baffled villains cursed the Providence that had thwarted their evil designs.

"We may as well go home, now," was Tim Brace's surly remark, as the *Daisy* swept on out of sight. "There's no further need of our services in these quarters," and he turned to go.

"What'll we do with the youngster and the gal?" asked Toby.

"Leave him where he is; he's tied tight, I suppose?"

Toby gave an affirmative sign, and Tim continued:

"Drive the gal home in the wagon you fetched her in, and make up some cock-and-bull story about a rescue. You fellows that she didn't see can do that. Then leave her at her dad's, and tell a good story. He'll very likely give you something handsome for your noble conduct."

The plan was adopted, and presently two of the crowd rushed up with a great noise, dispersed the others, rescued the helpless girl, removed her bonds, carried her hastily to a wagon in which Ham had driven her to the spot under the pretext that Lem had wished to see her, being dangerously ill, and putting her into this, drove hastily off.

"But, Ham, why didn't you stop and see how Lemuel was?" she asked.

"That was a put-up job," answered the scamp, "and those fellows completely fooled me. I came up with 'em, though, for I pretended to be hurt when they made that rush on us, and I drove away and got help, and we soon scattered the varmints."

Ham received Maggie's praises with great humbleness—all assumed, however; and he expected to be well-treated when he reached the home of his fair charge. Maggie had overheard a portion of the scheme, however, her ears being open; and although she said nothing while on the return, a few words revealed the real state of the case to her father when she arrived at the house; and the elated Ham, instead of being welcomed cordially by the old people, and invited to come in and partake of the best the house afforded, was ignominiously kicked down the front steps by the irate deacon, who represented the church militant, and he wended his way sadly homeward, meditating upon the instability of human hopes and ambitions, while pretty Maggie only laughed at his plight, and said it served him just right.

When Lem awoke to consciousness, he was lying on his back on the ground, his hands and feet untied and his gag removed. He arose, feeling somewhat stiff in the joints, and walked to the lighthouse, where he found the door standing open and everything just as he had left it. The wind had blown away the clouds, and the moon and stars were shining brightly. The light over his head was still as brilliant as ever, sending a broad white track over the waves, which still tossed and bubbled around the sunken reef from whose treacherous shoals a brave vessel had been saved that night by some mysterious agency, no one knew what.

Lem locked the door after him upon entering, and seeing by the tall clock in the corner next to the huge open fireplace that it was almost morning, hurried up stairs to look at the oil, feeling sure that a new supply would have to be pumped up very shortly.

His astonishment was great when he found the reservoirs full, and he wondered greatly at the circumstance, for the supply in them when he was talking to Ham from the window was scarcely enough to last three hours.

"There is something here I do not understand," mused he, retracing his steps. "Nothing has been disturbed here, and the light is all right. What does it mean? Can Maggie have been in the plot to get me outside? No—no, I will not even breathe a suspicion of her. She is too good, too noble, and yet I was evidently lured outside, and it was her voice that took me there!"

CHAPTER IV.

HOW THE TRAGEDY OF DEADMAN'S REEF WAS AGAIN BROUGHT TO MIND.

IN a rough shanty about a mile from Sharksfin Point, and overlooking the coast, were gathered eight or ten ill-appearing men, one afternoon about three days after the attempt to wreck the *Daisy*. Prominent among the men was Tim Brace, who was unfolding some plan to the others.

"Tell you what it is, boys," he said, "no one seems to know how we got fooled so bad the other night, and I guess the boy himself don't suspect that the *Daisy* was so near getting aground. There's a big West Indiaman coming up the coast to-night, bound for Boston, and as it's a wild, stormy evening, and as dark as a pocket, it won't be thought strange if she runs on the rocks."

"Are ye for tryin' to put out Loring's Light again?" said Toby. "I am afeard that racket won't work."

"The life-saving corps are gettin' suspicious," spoke up another man, Dirk Ringbolt, "and they do talk of keeping up a regular patrol every bad night all along the coast from Hamilton's beacon to Loring's, and a mile or so beyond."

"Let 'em do what they like after to-night," growled Tim; "but what we're going to do will be done soon. What I propose is to rig up a false light, right here on the cliff. The West Indiaman will take it for Sharksfin, and steer off, and by so doing will run straight upon the Camel's Back before he sees his mistake."

"Good enough, Tim," answered Ham, "that's better than trying to blow out the Sharksfin Light."

"Scatter along the coast, you fellows; and, Dick, do you send up a rocket when that ship passes Stony Cove, and that'll give me time to light up. Away with you, the whole tribe!"

The men quickly dispersed, and the night came slowly down, bringing with it the promise of a heavy gale, for already there was a stiff breeze blowing.

At about eleven o'clock that night, while the wind was howling like a hundred furies and driving a blinding storm of snow and fleet before it, Tim, from his lookout in the shanty on the cliff, saw, about a mile to the southward, a pale, blue rocket ascend high into the air, burst, and send out half a dozen white stars which fell slowly to the water.

Upon the instant he seized a knot of fatty pine, thrust it into the little stove, where a roaring fire was burning, and when it had well kindled ran outside, waving it over his head to make it burn more fiercely.

Then he dug up from the sand a long, slender bar of iron, sharpened at one end, on the other end of which he fastened an iron basket made of bits of hoop interlaced. Throwing his torch on top of this, he raised the whole aloft and stuck it firmly in the ground between two rocks, where it remained.

The basket had been filled with the resinous substances, and the wind had quickly helped the blazing knot to ignite them, and soon a strong light was shed by the false beacon, under which Tim stood in darkness, shading his eyes with his hands, and peering out into the water.

Then he ran into the house for a few minutes, after which he went down to the beach to see if there were any unwelcome visitors about.

He was surprised upon reaching the beach below to see a light dancing about upon the waters and apparently coming in toward the land. He looked again and imagined

he saw a little boat with a man standing upright in it and sculling to shore.

Above, on the cliff, flared the light of the lying signal, and over the waters he could just see the red port light of a large ship, the storm, snow and sleet having temporarily ceased.

He looked again toward where he had seen the gliding light, and saw to his astonishment that the boat was almost to land, and indeed only a few minutes intervened before he saw a man spring out, carrying a lantern in his hand.

This man came rapidly up the bank, passing Tim without saying a word, and took the path leading to the house on the cliff. The wrecker shouted after him, but there was no response, and with a savage oath Tim darted up the rocks in pursuit of the stranger, whom he took to be one of the life-saving corps.

The man reached the top of the cliff first, and Tim saw him endeavoring to pull up the rod supporting the false light. If it was his intention to save the approaching ship there was no time to lose, for already her port light was shining brightly just abreast of the spot, and she had begun to go off a little.

"What are you about, you infernal lubber?" shouted Tim, seizing the man by the throat and trying to drag him away.

The stranger threw Tim aside as if he had been a child, and then, with one mighty effort, pulled up the lying beacon and cast it flaming over the cliff into the sea, where it was speedily extinguished. Then he waved his lantern three times over his head and started to retrace his steps to the boat.

Tim had drawn an ugly-looking knife and was upon him in an instant, at the same time uttering a shrill whistle, which could be heard for a long distance.

The man threw up his lantern and caught Tim's blow upon the wire guard, and simultaneously advanced upon his assailant, who, at one glance at his face, gave a cry of alarm, and recoiled in horror.

"You alive!" he gasped, in the utmost terror. "I thought you dead long ago, drowned on Deadman's Reef!"

The man answered never a word, but pointed towards the bay where the West Indiaman had altered her course to its original direction, and was sailing swiftly on with Deadman's Reef far to leeward.

He laughed scornfully at the wrecker, whose face was black with rage, and striding quickly away, took the path to the beach, disappearing from sight in a few moments.

"Baffled again!" hissed Tim, "and by a dead man; but the next time I shall not fail! Ha! who is that?"

Two men rushed forward with pale faces and blanched lips, and staggered against him for support.

"My Lord!" said Toby, "if I hadn't seen it I wouldn't have believed it. Will the tragedy of Deadman's Reef never be forgotten?"

"Curse you, man, hold your tongue," roared Tim. "Never mention that again."

"I couldn't help it, for I saw the ghost of the murdered man," stammered Toby.

"So did I," answered Ham. "I was almost frightened to death."

"Shut up, — it, can't you say he was drowned?" hissed Tim, throwing Toby from him; "who told you to say he was murdered?"

"Nobody; but seeing the man glaring at me with his old horrified look, and his thin, bloodstained lips quivering, was enough to give me the horrors. My God! will the man never rest in his grave?"

For answer Tim struck the man a blow on the chest that sent him reeling against the door of the shanty, which flew open and let him down upon the floor.

"Never speak of that again," said Tim, sternly. "It is enough to be baffled of one's honest dues by the fiend, let alone having to hear the past raked up every minute. The

man was drowned, committed suicide, and deserved his fate for being so careless. There will be another wreck some day, and Master Lem will get into the same box."

"He is a brave lad and as keen as a brier," said Ham, "and you'll have to buy a new pair of boots to get ahead of him. Did Dirk do his part of the business?"

"Yes, he did," answered Tim, furiously, "and if you fellows had stuck to your business and helped me get rid of that meddler we would've made a big haul out of this night's work, and then the coast guard could have said what they liked."

CHAPTER V.

THE WRECK OF THE "RAINBOW," AND THE MYSTERY OF JOCK TRIMBLE'S ENORMOUS APPETITE.

THERE were a great many terrible gales during that month of September, and many vessels were wrecked along the coast, being fairly driven on shore by the fierce winds, and the beach for miles in the vicinity of Deadman's Reef was lined with fragments of vessels. Indeed, the year was spoken of long afterwards as the year of the terrible gales, one in particular causing much damage and keeping Lem a prisoner in the lighthouse for two or three days.

The waters beat against the house so furiously that it seemed as if it would be dashed to pieces every minute, and the winds blew so that the tower was observed to sway back and forth. The point was nearly all submerged, and the waters seethed and foamed so around the sunken rocks that it would have been extremely dangerous for Lem to try and get to the mainland. The waves dashed about the steps so furiously, also, the spray freezing as it fell, that an attempt to launch his little boat would have been fool-hardy in the extreme.

Within, however, all was bright, warm, and cheerful; the fire snapped and roared, the tea kettle sang, and the crickets chirped, and no matter how loudly the storm howled without, here there was nothing that did not speak of comfort.

It was about noon one day late in the month, when, after a spell of particularly furious winds, there came the sound of a cannon, and Lem, looking out, saw a large vessel driving head first upon the treacherous reef. In another instant she had struck, and before a boat could be launched she had split in two, the forward part being thrown clear up on the beach, where those who were so fortunate as to be upon it quickly jumped ashore and were safe.

Others were not so fortunate, however, and Lem saw a poor man tossing about upon a plank, his hands chilled and benumbed, and his hair and beard covered with ice. As good luck would have it, the man was thrown upon the steps of the lighthouse, and Lem lost no time in pulling him in and making him comfortable.

The poor fellow was almost exhausted with the cold, and from being dashed about among the waves, and it was quite a while before he could manage to say anything. Lem chafed his hands and feet, wrapped him up well in thick flannel, gave him some strong brandy to drink, and made him presently eat a warm plate of soup, the pot bubbling and steaming on the fire and sending out an appetizing odor which was most refreshing.

In the meantime, those that could be saved, many drowning soon after they struck the water, were cared for by those on land, and given shelter from the pitiless gale.

Tim Brace, Dirk Ringbolt, Toby, and the others of the gang of wreckers, were already busily at work securing what plunder they could without being observed, and while Tim's boys, a trio of unmannerly cubs, ranging from thirteen to fifteen years, were laying in a supply of firewood sufficient to last a month, their honored father was taking care of all the barrels of pork, kegs of nails, and cases of tobacco that he could lay hold of; and not having time to carry them all off, hid the most of them in a snug

little nook in the rocks that he knew of, with the intention of removing them at some more convenient day.

Lem succeeded after a while in getting new life into the man, who said his name was Jock Trimble, or John Trimble, but generally called Jock, for short, being a Scotchman. The vessel was the *Rainbow*, and Jock had all his wages for three years tied up in a bag, and stowed away in the fore-castle; and now it was all lost, and he would have to go to work all over again; and he had promised to marry a nice girl down in New Jersey, at the end of this voyage.

The young keeper bade him not to worry over that, but to keep warm and get plenty of sleep.

"Does your father keep the light?" asked the man.

"My father? No, I wish he did. He's been dead for two years. I keep it myself."

"Why, you're but a lad yet; you can't be of age, even."

"No, I am not, and I've kept the house for two years. Have you never heard of Deadman's Reef and Lighthouse Lem?"

"To be sure; why, Lord bless me, I thought Lem must be a man by the stories they told about him. You've got tidy quarters here, my fine boy, and you'll be for bringing a wife here some day, I fancy."

"I shouldn't be surprised," answered Lem, laughing and blushing, and soon after that the man went to sleep, while Lem went up aloft to knock the ice from the glass protecting the light.

He had left a bowl of soup and two or three large slices of bread on the table, intending to have a good lunch when he came down, thinking that the soup would cool in that time. Upon his return he was surprised to find the soup eaten up and the bread gone, besides two or three other slices cut from the loaf, which had evidently been very hastily caught up and attacked.

"Well, my man, I'm glad to see that you have so good an appetite," said Lem, quietly, looking over toward Jock, who sat sound asleep before the fire—Lem using the fireplace as well as a stove—utterly unconscious of what was going on around him.

"The man would breed a famine," laughed Lem, filling up his bowl and cutting another slice of bread. "Where he put it all in that short space of time I cannot imagine, unless he bottled it."

Late in the afternoon the man awoke and said he felt hungry. Lem laughed and asked him if the three slices of bread and pint of hot soup which disappeared when he was out of the room had been digested so soon.

"I don't begrudge you anything," said Lem, "but I must say that you have a terrible appetite."

"I only ate a bowl o' soup and a hunk o' bread," answered Jock, opening his eyes.

"How about what I left on the table?"

"Didn't you eat it yourself?"

"No, I left it when I went up, and when I came down it was gone."

"I heard somebody moving around, and being sleepy I thought it was you, and didn't look around. Whoever it was, was eatin', for I heard him swallowing the soup and cutting the bread, and I dropped clean off while he was still tuckin' in the grub."

Lem had no reason to believe that the man was telling an untruth, for the latter knew he was welcome to all the food he wanted, and was too much of a man to lie about so small a matter.

"There is someone in the house," said Lem, after a pause. "I have often missed food, but thought the cats had taken it, but now I am convinced that someone is hiding here, and has been for some time."

CHAPTER VI.

HOW LIGHTHOUSE LEM RECOVERED THE FORTUNE OF JOCK TRIMBLE, AND WHAT TIM BRACE THREATENED.

"If I'd have eaten all that stuff," laughed Jock, "I'd

have been so full that I wouldn't want any more for two days. Whoever it was must have been hungry."

"He is welcome to all he wants, then. I never put my grub under lock and key, and I always have enough and to spare. Nobody goes hungry in this house."

Jock was so far recovered by nightfall, that he offered to sit up half the night and tend the light, and also to share Lem's labors as long as he remained there, Lem accepted the offer and took the first watch, calling Jock at midnight.

The next day was still very unpleasant, and the two men remained in doors, Jock telling stories of his past life and relating how he had expected to settle down at the end of this voyage, start a little store, and live quietly with his wife.

"And that twelve hundred dollars was going to come in so nice, with what I already had tucked away in the bank; and now it's all gone."

"Where did you have it?"

"Done up in a stout canvas bag marked 'J. T.,' and stuck away in a box away up for'ard, clear in the fore peak ahead of the Sampson post, as far for'ard as I could stick it."

The conversation turned upon something else, and nothing more was said about the money. The next day the weather had greatly moderated, the water had gone down, and Lem proposed a trip to the other shore, or in reality to the other end of it, for they could now get along without the use of the boat.

They accordingly walked along, and presently Lem said: "Did you say you put your money in the bow of the vessel?"

"Yes, clear way up for'ard."

"Well, then, perhaps it isn't lost after all. Do you see that bit of wreck yonder, on the beach? That's the bow of the *Rainbow*, and maybe your money's there yet!"

"Hope it is, I'll be a lucky dog then, and no mistake." and away they both hurried, making good use of their legs and scampering off like colts.

When they reached the wreck they saw that it was indeed the forward part of the *Rainbow*, and they quickly scrambled up on the side that had fallen nearest the sands, meaning to search well for the precious box.

They had just reached the deck when they met a man coming up from the hold, Lem recognizing him instantly as Brace, the wrecker.

He quickly passed them, and jumping to the sands made off quickly, while Jock asked Lem who he was.

"Jim Brace, as big a scamp as ever lived. I suspect he is a wrecker, and makes a living by no honest means."

Jock made his way down in the fore-castle, and groped around a few moments when he uttered a cry of disappointment.

"It's gone—gone! and now I'll have to put off getting married."

"Can't you find the box?"

"Yes, the box is here, but it's been busted into, and the bag is gone."

"I'll bet a hat that Tim Brace has taken it this minute; he had something heavy under his coat when he jumped, and I heard it rattle."

"The man we met as we came up?"

"Yes, hurry up. I see him now going along the beach lively. He's got a shanty on the cliff about a mile off. I'm after him, keep me in sight for I may need your help," and so saying Lem jumped to the ground, and hurried after Tim, who had just disappeared around a rock, and did not see that he was followed.

By the time that Lem came in sight of him again he had gained considerably upon him, and the man chancing to look back saw Lem hurrying after him, but did not see Jock. He grunted out something meant for a laugh, and paused a moment as Lem came hurrying on.

Then he continued his walk, but at an accelerated rate

of speed, and was half way up the rocks when the lad shouted out to him from the bottom to stop.

"What for, I should like to know?"

"Because I wan't to see you, that's what for."

"Come on up, then, and be blowed to you; I can't stop here in the middle of the path."

When Lem reached the shanty he found the door bolted, and called to Tim to let him in; and receiving no answer, put his shoulders to it, and sent it flying from its hinges in a twinkling. He bounced in, and was just in time to see Tim covering up something on the hearth with a large stone.

"That's a pretty way to come into a feller's house, isn't it?"

"Serves you right; what do you want to lock me out for? What have you been burying there?"

"Nothing; only been raking up the ashes to make a fire for supper. Stay and have something?"

"No; what do you want to lie for?"

"Who's been lying?"

"You have. You've got that sailor's money, the fellow that you saw with me on the wreck, and you've got to give it up."

"Findings is keepings in such cases."

"You have got it then? I thought so."

"Never said I had, and s'pose I did, you wouldn't get it."

"We will see about that," and the lad made a rush for the fireplace, threw Tim aside before the latter could suspect his intention, and turning over the stone, revealed a canvas bag marked "J. T."

He caught this up, finding it pretty heavy, and he dropped it upon the rude table in the center of the room, making a jingling noise in the act.

"Let that alone, 'tis mine," shouted Tim, grabbing up the poker, and advancing upon Lem, who seized the bag, and made for the door, reaching the outside just as Jock Trimble appeared, armed with a heavy cudgel he had picked up on the way.

"Ha-ha, you've got it, have you?" he said, seeing the bag in Lem's hands. "You put down the cliff, and take care of it while I 'tend to the old man."

Tim came out at that moment, and seeing Jock, paused irresolutely, and then demanded what he wanted.

"Nothing now. I've got it. I'm much obliged to you for takin' care of my money, but I'd a little rather do it myself."

"Nobody had your money; it was mine, and I'll break that lad's neck for stealing it from me, see if I don't."

"Try it on, if you think best," answered Lem, who had remained behind, instead of taking Jock's advice to beat a retreat. He knew that Brace was a coward, and would back down when he saw two, instead of one, arrayed against him.

"You know you took that money from where it was hid, knowing it to be somebody else's, for the box was locked, and the bag was marked 'J. T.' That isn't your name, and it is that of this man here," the lad continued.

"And what's more, I mean to keep it," added Jock. "Come along, boy, he doesn't care to fight," he continued, glancing contemptuously at Tim, and the two started to return to the lighthouse, Tim shouting after them as they descended:

"Curse you, Lem Loring, I'll fix you for this, and make the lighthouse too hot to hold you. There'll be a wreck yet laid to your account, and you'll find yourself out of a job."

CHAPTER VII.

LORING'S LIGHT IS PUT OUT, BUT SHINES FORTH AGAIN MOST MYSTERIOUSLY.

"Do you think he means mischief?" asked Jock, when they had reached the beach again.

"I suppose so, for he has a bad name. I am not afraid of him, though, and he'd better not come fooling around me."

"Now I have got my money back and don't want to go to sea again, I would not mind a job on shore," said Jock. "Could you give me one at the light?"

"I don't know but what I might, though I don't have so very much myself. There is a man needed, though, and father always used to have one. I'll hire you for the winter and put it in my bill to the coast service, so that will be all right."

The matter was then arranged, and the hours that each was to work settled upon; and in the afternoon, Lem went into the town to buy some necessary articles, leaving Jock to look after the house in his absence.

He promised to return shortly before dark, but Jock had lit up before he saw any signs of him; and just as he was beginning to wonder at his prolonged absence, a boy came to the door and said that the keeper had hurt himself and wanted the man to come and help bring him home. He had fallen upon some slippery rocks, the boy said, and had broken his leg, and there wasn't anybody near that could assist him. The boy himself had happened to be passing, and that was how he knew about it.

Suspecting nothing, Jock put on his hat and coat, and telling the boy to show him the place, which he said was only a quarter of a mile away, ran out, and had gone but a few steps, when the boy, who was Jim Brace, the eldest son of the wrecker, gave a shrill whistle, and three men suddenly sprang out from behind the house and bound and blindfolded Jock before he could offer any resistance.

They then hurried him along the path, and in a few moments he felt himself lifted up and laid down in what seemed to be a boat, for he could feel the motion of the waves and hear the water beating against the side.

Previous to this, Lem himself had been waylaid, and was at that time a prisoner on the portion of the *Rainbow* which had been washed ashore, being secured to the stump of the foremast in such a position that he could see the light from the point and the water beyond it.

"Keep your eye well on that point," said a man with a black mask, but whom Lem readily recognized as the wrecker, "and you will see something to astonish ye. You were told that there would be a wreck before long, and the feller that said that was tellin' no lies."

It had grown quite dark, as there was no moon, and the light could be plainly seen shining over the waters; but after Lem had gazed at it for about ten minutes it suddenly went out, leaving the dangerous point and Deadman's Reef shrouded in the blackest darkness.

Lem then realized that the wrecker had begun the fulfillment of his dire threat, and that any vessel that might pass that way, not knowing of the dangers that beset her, would be lost upon the rocks and her cargo become the prey of the human wolves who infested the neighborhood.

He thought it strange that Jock should have proven false, and regretted having placed confidence in him; but a few minutes' reflection assured him that the man must have been overpowered by the wreckers, so that there would be no one to look after the light.

The wind had arisen and was blowing directly towards shore, and the sea was rough and chopping, circumstances which would tell badly against any vessel not having the guidance of the light to help them.

Lem had been left alone for over half an hour, and still the point and the reef were in total darkness, when he heard steps approaching, and pretty soon one of the men, whom he knew to be Dirk Ringbolt, came up to him and said with a coarse laugh:

"You won't spoil our little game to-night, my boy, for we've got you where the hair is short. You thought you were mighty smart to hire a man to help you, but we've fixed him. He ain't so smart as you, I'll say that much,

and we didn't have much trouble in getting him out of the way."

Lem answered nothing, and then Toby spoke up:

"You don't see the light, do ye? No, of course not, and that brigantine that's coming along won't see it either, and will go plump on top of the Deadman and you'll get the credit. You'll be put back there after it's all over so as to get a good blowin' up, and then an honest man will be put in charge of the light, one that don't want to take the bread out of his neighbors' mouths, the way you do!"

The men left him, and, gathered in a knot on the beach, were discussing the probable value of the cargo of the expected brigantine. Dirk had received information of her coming, and had posted the gang that very afternoon, soon after Brace had made his threat to Lem, and the villain had lost no time in carrying his threat into execution.

After putting out the light the men had closed the door of the house, knowing that Lem had a key, and that they could put him in after the wreck, drugging him beforehand and sticking a bottle of spirits in his pocket.

They waited on the beach until the next oldest son of Tim Brace came running from the point, and told them that Ham had signaled the vessel to be in sight, and that they might expect her every minute.

At this piece of news, which was welcome to them, the villains chuckled and began to get ready a boat, for the evident purpose of relieving the wrecked sailors, but really that they might plunder the brigantine all the more readily.

The whole gang were talking together excitedly, Ham having rejoined them by sailing around in a little boat, and Jim Brace being placed on guard over Lem, when they suddenly noticed the outlines of the brigantine, beating her way around the point and in imminent peril of going upon the rocks.

Then, all of a sudden, to their utter bewilderment, they saw a broad track of white light shoot across the water, flooding the vessel with brightness and showing her the danger she was in. She quickly bore off and soon passed the reef, the light still illuminating the waters, while the wreckers swore roundly and cursed the fate that had again baffled them of their intended victims.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE FURTHER OCCURRENCES OF THAT STRANGE NIGHT.

NOTHING could exceed the wrath and chagrin of the wreckers when they beheld the lighthouse so suddenly illuminated, after it had remained in darkness so long, and they vowed dire vengeance upon the one who had relit the lamps, and allowed the brigantine to escape from their clutches.

Some of them proposed visiting swift vengeance upon Lem, but Dick and Tim dissuaded them from this, arguing that the boy could have had nothing to do with the affair, not having lit up the house, in the first place, and being a prisoner at the time of the sudden reappearance of the light.

Tim swore that someone had been left in the house, and taking Lem's key from the lad's pocket, he soon entered the lighthouse, followed by all the gang, and they began a search for the rash person who had foiled them; but their search was entirely fruitless, for not a person could they find.

Dick then went up into the tower, and extinguished the light a second time, saying that no one knew but what there might be a vessel coming by in the night, and if so, she would be wrecked, and they would get something after all.

So once again the reef and the point were shrouded in darkness, and the wreckers departed, slamming the door behind them—it closed with a spring lock—and leaving Lem still on the wreck of the *Rainbow*, carrying the keys away with them.

They had scarcely reached the higher ground above the

beach, when a bright light from the sea attracted their attention, and they looked toward the point, thinking that the lighthouse was again shining, but they were mistaken, for it was as dark as ever, and the light they saw came from a point further south than the house.

Another glance showed them that the light was that of a fire, and that the fire was upon the ruins of the *Rainbow*, which burned like tinder, and sent up a tremendous pillar of flame and smoke, serving for a beacon almost as well as the lighthouse had done.

The men glanced around at each other inquiringly, to see if anyone knew of the cause of the fire, or if anybody was missing, who might have built it. They were all there, even Jim Brace, and all seemed equally astonished.

"We left the lad there, and he will burn up," gasped Dick. "Much as I hate the brat, I wouldn't care to have him die that way. His death might be laid at our door."

"Never fear, and small odds if it was," snapped Toby. "He'd kill us if he got half a chance, and why shouldn't we do the same."

"For no reason, yon bloodthirsty brute," rejoined Brace. "I have as little cause to love the young devil as you have, and yet I don't want to see him burned up. I'm going down to see if I can help him."

"Look—look," cried Ham, "the light is going again. By jingo, that beats the devil."

Sure enough the light was again shining brightly and throwing its broad track over the waters, and by the glare of the two lights, the fire and the beacon, a gallant ship could be seen speeding on in safety, bound in a contrary direction to that in which the brigantine had gone.

"Sold again, as I'm a sinner," swore Dick, "and we didn't know anything about it; but come, let's go and see how the lad is getting on; he'll be burned to a crisp before we get there."

"Do you see that?" cried Toby, suddenly, in excited tones, pointing down the coast. "See those rockets there, and there, and there! The coast patrol is out, and we had better scatter ourselves as lively as we know how."

"But the boy?" said Dirk.

"Let him burn!" answered Tim, savagely, beginning to run towards his shanty; but the next minute a tall form suddenly shot up before him, holding a lantern aloft in one hand, and the tiller of a boat in the other.

He shrieked in affright:

"The murdered man again! My God! will he give me no rest?"

The figure advanced upon him, and he turned and fled in abject terror, his limbs being barely able to support him. Dirk, too, saw the figure, which bore the exact image of Loring, who was supposed to have committed suicide two years before, and who had been buried for that length of time in the ancient graveyard.

Dirk was as badly frightened as Tim had been, and with a muttered curse upon his lips, he followed his comrade, while the others scattered in all directions, some only to fall into the hands of the patrol, who carried them off to the lock-up.

Ham was among this number, and he loudly protested his innocence of anything wrong. He had scarcely spoken the words, however, when a hand was laid upon his shoulder, and turning, he saw Jock Trimble glaring at him.

"Don't tell any more lies now!" ejaculated the tar. "It wasn't your boat that I was put in, was it? And it wasn't you that sent up the rocket, and then pulled me back and left me lying on my face in the bottom? I know ye, my man, and I have eyes in the back of my head. Take him in, my friend, for he knows all about this night's work," and Ham was carried off to the village lock-up, bitterly bemoaning his sad lot.

Toby, in his flight from the combined attack of the supposed dead man and the guard, suddenly found himself face to face with Lem, who sprang upon him and bore him to the earth, holding him there with one knee pressed

firmly upon his chest, and a horse-pistol staring him in the face.

"Not so fast, Toby, my boy! I saw your fine capers to-night, and this little toy that you dropped on the tower steps came in quite handy."

"I didn't set the *Rainbow* on fire!" gasped the terrified rascal, shaking with fear.

"Nobody said you did," answered Lem. "I didn't get even scorched, and the fire was a good thing, for it cheated you out of accomplishing your hellish designs."

CHAPTER IX.

THE TERRIBLE STRUGGLE ON THE CLIFF.

"How did it all happen, Jock?" asked Lem, an hour afterwards, as the two sat before a cheery fire talking over the events of the night.

Jock explained how he had been entrapped, and then said that after being left in the boat he managed to free his hands and turn over on his face, when he saw the light shine suddenly forth through the darkness; and that soon after somebody stooped over him, cut the cords that bound his feet, and hurried away. After this he overheard some of the men discussing their plans, and was just in time to interrupt Harris' retreat.

Lem had been as much astonished as anybody at the sudden going out and relighting of the lamps, and supposed the wreckers had done it, until they returned for his key. After the light had gone out again he suddenly discovered that the wreck was on fire, but before the flames could reach him he felt somebody cut the cords from behind, and when he turned around, the person, whoever it was, had disappeared.

"They have got my key," he said, "and we will have to put up the inside bar when only one of us is indoors, so those fellows can't get in at us."

"We mustn't give 'em a chance."

"I don't intend to, and I'll put the sheriff on Tim's track to-morrow."

He did so, but both Tim and Dirk had disappeared, and no trace of them could be discovered. Toby was game to the last, and would not inform upon any of his associates, but Ham disclosed the whole plot, being badly frightened, and gave the names of every one of the gang and the amount of property they had stolen.

Tim had fled, but there was an avenger upon his track whom he could not escape, and who worked so persistently and secretly that his tracks were never seen.

About a week after the raid upon the lighthouse the high sheriff of the county received the following mysterious message, written in a sprawling hand upon a leaf torn from an old account book, yellow and musty with age:

"Murder will out, and the suicide is sometimes found to have been murdered. Who was the man found dead on the reefs? Where is the lighthouse keeper? He is not dead, but worse than dead. Tombstones tell lies. Break up the one over Loring's grave. Loring has no grave, but a shattered brain. Track the murderers to their death. Who put the bottle in the light-keeper's pocket? Who killed a tramp, and called it Loring? Hunt them down and give them no peace. Blood for blood, life for life. While breath remains to them the villains shall know that there is a
NEMESIS."

This extraordinary letter, while it revealed a deeply laid plot, did not name the perpetrators, and the constabulary at once set about to find them. The idea that Loring was alive, and that some other man had been buried under the supposition that the body was his, was so startling, and yet so feasible, when it was remembered that the body had never been recognized fully as that of the light-keeper, that the mystery of Deadman's Reef was more unsolvable than ever.

If Loring was alive, where was he and why did he not show himself? Where had he been for two years, that no

one should have met him? for he was so well-known in the place that identification would have been the easiest thing in the world if he had but made himself known.

Was he on the track of his traducers, hunting them to the death? If so, why did he not name them? Did he wish to reserve the entire work of vengeance for himself? That must have been the case, thought the gossips, and the affair assumed a new and more interesting phase, and they sought with eagerness the further unraveling of the mystery.

It was on a blustering afternoon late in October, and the affair was still as mysterious as ever, the chief offenders not having been taken, when the figure of a man clad in rough, heavy clothes, and wearing a sou'wester hat, could be seen climbing the cliffs leading to Tim Brace's abandoned shanty.

The man was, in fact, the wrecker himself, who had risked returning, thinking that maybe the affair had blown over, and that he could safely return for a day or so at least, having some new piece of deviltry on hand by which he expected to make a tidy little sum, enough to send him across the continent, or on the other side of the water where he could live in ease and comfort upon his ill-gotten gains.

He had reached the top of the cliff and had just put his hand on the latch of the door, when it was thrown open, and a tall, powerfully built man clothed in rags and wearing long, unkempt hair and a full, tangled, beard, with haggard cheeks and fierce, savage-looking eyes, dashed upon him, and with a yell more like a wild beast than a man's, fastened his long, bony fingers upon Tim's throat.

"Ha-ha-ha! at last—at last!" he screamed, with wild laughter. "The hour of my vengeance is come. Now, perjurer, thief and murderer, your time is up. Kill the light-keeper, would you? Ruin him and blacken his name forever? No—no, you shall not. Time shall change all things, and the wrongs of the past shall be made right in the present. The future we know nothing of. Ha-ha! who says so? He lies—he lies! 'tis false, for we know all that ever was and all that is to be. Ha-ha!"

He rattled his words off so vehemently and furiously that one followed immediately upon another without a break. His eye kindled and his breast heaved, and in his fierce grasp the stalwart wrecker was but as a child. He was a maniac, surely, but that he had one terrible purpose in view there could be no doubt, and that was the death of the wrecker.

Tim struggled with all his strength, but in vain. He felt himself growing weaker and weaker every instant; his eyes protruded from their sockets; his tongue hung from his mouth, and the blood seemed about to burst open the top of his head. He grew black in the face, and then sank back as limp as a rag.

Gathering the inanimate form in a mass, the madman, for such he was, beyond a doubt, hurled the powerless ruffian from the cliff into the sea, where the waves tossed and beat the body about, finally casting it up on Deadman's Reef, which was at that time partly out of water.

When the maniac saw this, he laughed long and loud, and with rapid strides disappeared behind the rocks.

CHAPTER X.

RESTORED TO REASON BY THE ASSASSIN'S HAND.

THAT night, after the lamps had been lit, Jock, who had not turned in, came suddenly running into the large room where they generally sat, and called Lem to come up to one of the little windows and see a strange sight.

Looking out, a small light was seen out upon the water, and presently in the track of light cast by the beacon, he saw a little boat with a solitary occupant—a tall man with flowing hair and beard—pulling toward the land.

He came closer and closer, and soon landed right at the

base of the lighthouse, drawing his boat into a little cove formed by the rocks. Then he stepped out, and locking down, the lad saw him walk around the corner of the house and disappear.

"Who is it, and what is he doing there?" he asked.

"I don't know. I have seen him several times, and have heard him prowling about during the day, and several times I thought it was you."

"Let us go out quietly and see where he goes," said Lem, feeling a strange interest in the mysterious being, whom Lem did not remember to have ever seen before.

They stole out quietly and ran around the house, and at a point opposite the steps they saw him just disappearing through a small, low door made of stout oak plank. As they reached this door, it closed behind the man with a bang, and they heard the turning of a key in the lock.

Lem pounded upon the door and asked who was there, but all the response he heard was a muttered growl, and footsteps moving away in the darkness.

"That door is always kept locked," he said, "and I have never had occasion to open it since I have been here. It leads to the old store-house and well, where we draw water when our other supplies give out. Can this be the retreat of the mysterious person who, from time to time, makes raids upon our larder?"

"It must be. Is there any communication to this store-house from the inside?"

"Yes, but I rarely go there myself. It would afford an excellent hiding-place for anyone, but I had no idea that the door was ever opened. Whoever this man is, he is remarkably sly, not to have been detected before; I wonder how long he has made it his home there?"

"Have you got the key to this door with you? We might follow him up."

"Oh, no, let him alone; he is welcome to his strange quarters."

"But how do you know he is not one of the wreckers, and that he will let in the rest of the gang and make a rush upon us in the night?"

"He doesn't seem to be that sort, but is probably some poor old fellow whom my father has befriended in times past, and who has gone in there for shelter at odd times since he died."

"Perhaps your key of the other door will fit this?"

"Maybe so."

"Try it."

Lem did so, and to his surprise he was able to open the door, which he pushed back, and entered a narrow passage, which soon turned and led upwards.

"I am glad I came in here," said he, "for that fellow, Tim Brace, might have come in here at any time with that key of mine. I never thought to have the lock on this door changed."

"Let's go on up now while we're here," said Jock, slamming the heavy door behind him. "We may find our mysterious friend who lives here."

They ascended the steps, and in a few moments Lem said, in great excitement: "I saw him just then, or at least the glimmer of his lantern; hurry—hurry, we may catch him."

They hurried on past the old store-house and well-house, and then up another flight of steps leading into the main hall, where the staircase that led up to the tower was.

As they reached this they heard the door leading to the large room slam, and then they heard a loud cry of astonishment uttered by someone, followed by a struggle of some sort, for they could hear the sound of a falling body, and then shouts and curses.

They burst into the room and were almost stifled by a dense cloud of smoke, in the midst of which they saw the strange man struggling with some one and endeavoring to throw him down.

The other man had a murderous-looking knife in his hand, which he brandished in a threatening manner, try-

ing at the same time to break away from the man who held him in a vise-like grasp.

He had evidently been detected in trying to set the place on fire, and already the flames had made considerable headway, being fanned by the wind from outside, which blew through the open door, Lem having neglected to close it after him when he and Jock ran out to see where the strange man went.

Lem sprang towards him and seized his arm just as he had aimed a furious blow at his captor, but was not in time to prevent his striking him on the temple, though not with as much force as he would have done.

The blood spurted from the old man's head, and he clapped his hands to his face quickly, standing that way for a full minute, as if stunned.

The other broke away from him and made a dash for the door, Jock being unable to stop him, but as he did so Lem recognized him, and uttered a cry of astonishment, for it was no less a person than Dirk Ringbolt, the wreck-er."

He tried to stop him, but it was no use, for Dirk made good use of his legs and sped away in the darkness as if all the devils in the pit were in pursuit,

Lem then turned to the strange old man, and the latter removing his hands and showing his face, the lad was completely thunderstruck, and for an instant was utterly deprived of the power of speech.

"Father—father!" he cried, impetuously, when he was at last able to speak, and rushing up he seized the man's hand, and said, in great excitement: "Father, tell me, is it you? Can this be possible? You live? Oh, what joy!"

"Lemuel, my boy—my boy!" faltered the old man, folding him in his arms. "Thank God for this and for my restored reason. That murderous blow has let in the light of understanding upon my poor brain so long darkened by insanity, for I know now that I must have been wandering in my mind for many long months, how long I know not."

"And I have mourned you as lost all this time, and never knew how near you were to me. Heaven is kind to have restored you to me."

Once more they clasped each other in a close embrace, when suddenly they were startled by the sound of Jock's voice calling to them in the wildest alarm.

"Run—run for your lives," he said. "The lighthouse is on fire, and nothing can save us if we remain here!"

CHAPTER XI.

THE LIGHT ON SHARKSFIN POINT GROWS BRIGHTER.

JOCK had spoken the truth, and even at that instant the flames received fresh stimulus, and burst upon them from a dozen points, crackling and roaring like a furnace.

It was useless to try to put them out, and every moment was precious. There was such a tremendous draught that the fire was driven onward and upward, licking up everything that came in its way, cracking huge beams in twain as if they had been laths, and bursting the stout doors from their hinges like the flimsiest things that could be made from waste slabs.

The air was intensely hot, and filled with stifling smoke, and there could be no living in it. Catching his father by the hand, Lem ran swiftly from the room, down the stone-steps, and upon the rocks, speedily followed by Jock.

Even then they ran the risk of being struck by falling stones, or timbers, and they hastily ran to the shore end of the Point, and watched the flames at a safe distance.

It was a grand and awful sight, the fire having by this time reached the light tower, and shooting out from all the windows large and small, the jets of flame looking like

blazing tongues eager to lap up whatever came in their way.

There was a tremendous explosion, and crash of glass, the windows bursting with a loud report. Immediately afterward the flames enveloped the whole top of the house, shooting their forked tongues out into the night to a great distance, and lighting the heavens with a fierce glare.

Sea and sky were lit up by the flaming beacon, and no longer did the broad white track of light spread out over the waters. It was blood red, and shone all around, startling the sailors far out at sea, and reminding them of the eruptions of volcanos which they had often seen in their journeys to tropic climes.

The people of the village were greatly alarmed by the light, and they rang the fire bells furiously, and dragged out the old fire engine, an antiquated affair that had seen very many years of service, and was scarcely good for anything in an ordinary fire, to say nothing of this one which was impossible to be put out, and which would have to be allowed to take its own course, and die for lack of further material to feed upon.

It was a beautiful and awe inspiring sight to watch the glowing flames dart upward to an enormous height, illuminating the sea and land for miles around, and the little party who had been driven from their home were watching it intently, in company with many of the inhabitants of the little town, when suddenly Jock uttered a shrill cry, and darted toward the Point.

"Bless me if I didn't forget every word about it!" he said, as he hurried off, without any further explanation.

Those nearest the end of the Point were horrified to see him dash through the open doorway into the blazing building, and expected nothing but that he would never return alive; and they sent up a cry of distress at what they considered his rashness, never expecting to see him return.

The fire was nearly all up above, however, the flames below having been all driven into the tower, and in a few moments they beheld him coming out staggering under a heavy load.

"There! I've got mine and his too," he ejaculated, dropping some weighty object upon the ground.

Lem had reached the spot by this time, and to him, Jock said, pointing to the things on the ground:

"There, my friend, I've saved your strong box for you, and have got my own little pile besides. I reckon your money and papers are in there."

"Thanks, Jock, a dozen times," answered the youth, seizing the man's hand, and shaking it vigorously. "I never thought of it myself. Not only the bulk of my money is there, but records which could never be replaced if they had been destroyed. Come away quick, or we may be struck by falling stones or iron."

He grabbed hold of one end of the heavy box, which was more than one man would care to lift under ordinary circumstances, and Jock, taking the other, they hurried away from the scene of the disaster, and well they did, for they had barely reached the middle of the Point before there was a terrible noise, and the whole top of the lighthouse, stones, iron, heavy beams and all, were thrown up into the air, and the fragments flew far and wide, striking many who had ventured too near.

The flames still rushed up as if through a huge chimney, and the sight was a most wonderful one, although our hero did not feel very many sublime thoughts when the idea came to him that he was losing his old home, and of the loss to vessels that the absence of the light would occasion.

He began thinking how it long it would take to build another lighthouse, and whether any of the old material could be used in the construction of a new building, and what could be done in the way of erecting a temporary beacon in the meantime.

He soon found his father, who was surrounded by a crowd of anxious villagers, they having recognized him, and asking him a thousand questions as to where he had been, and why he let people think he was dead, and if he knew who started the fire, and a host of others, none of which he answered, for they gave him no time but chattered and buzzed around him like a flock of magpies gone mad.

Lem led his father away from the crowd of well-meaning but annoying questioners, and came across Deacon Thorne, who welcomed him warmly, and begged that he would come and stay at his house as long as he pleased, saying that his wife would be delighted to have him do so, and he was certain Maggie would.

Lem blushed, and then said, pointing to his father: "And what shall I do with him, so wonderfully restored to life?"

"Bring him up, too, of course. I am delighted to see you, my old friend," the good deacon said, shaking Loring by the hand. "I am curious to know what has happened to you all this time; but let's get away from these people."

They started along the road, Lem and Jock carrying the box; and the deacon, recognizing the tar as Lem's assistant, would hear of nothing but that he must come too, as of course he would now have no place to stay, and he could not think of letting any friend of Lem's be thrown upon the charity of the villagers.

So they all trudged on until they reached the deacon's hospitable mansion, where they received a royal welcome, and of course the lovely Maggie was so glad to see Lem, and to know that he was not killed, that she kissed him again and again, never noticing that everybody was looking and that the good deacon was exchanging merry winks with the former lighthouse-keeper—the father of our hero.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HISTORY OF TWO YEARS RECOUNTED.

By the next day the fire had all burned out, and the ruins of the famous lighthouse stood gaunt and grim on Sharksfin Point, while the waves seethed and foamed over Deadman's Reef, seeming to laugh in triumph over the destruction of the light that had so often cheated them of their prey by pointing out the true path to passing ships, and had lighted their weary way over the ocean.

The house at the base of the tower had been almost totally destroyed, here and there a blackened timber showing where once it had stood; and above them rose the crumbling tower which shook in every breeze and occasionally scattered down a shower of stones and mortar. It was probable that nearly the whole of the structure would have to be torn down and rebuilt, for the heat had been so intense that the stones had crumbled before it like so much sand.

The body of Tim Brace had been carried out to sea again, and was never recovered, but few persons knowing what had become of him, and the majority of the townspeople supposed that he was pursuing his illegal calling upon some other and distant part of the coast.

His boys disappeared also, and of course nobody but a few supposed that they were not with their father; and Lem often wondered what had become of them, and whether they were growing up to be useful members of society or continuing in the evil career in which they had been reared.

Three or four days after the fire a party was gathered around the table in the deacon's spacious dining-room, one cold, blustering evening, talking over the subject of most interest to all, the party consisting, besides the deacon's own family, of Lem, his father and Jock Trimble.

The appearance of Loring had materially altered, and he looked once more like a civilized being, his hair being cut short and his beard trimmed, and comfortable garments put upon him, which showed his fine figure to great advan-

tage. His eye had lost its wild look, and his cheek had begun to put on the flush of health and to fill out, from the effects of an abundance of good, nourishing food.

Nobody had asked him to give the history of those past two years, and he suddenly astonished all in the room by saying:

"I suppose you would all like to know what I have been doing since the time when I was supposed to have committed suicide?"

"Don't tell us, father, unless you wish to, and feel strong enough," said Lem, taking his hand.

"I can do so now, as well as at any time," and clearing his throat, he continued as follows:

"On that terrible night when the *Vesper Bell* was wrecked, I was the victim of as foul a piece of treachery as was ever practiced upon a man. Tim Brace and Dirk Ringbolt, two of the blackest villains that ever lived, came into the house, and after talking awhile, asked me to take a drink with them. I never drank, as Lem can tell you, and I refused, upon which they pressed me mighty hard, but I hung out, and declared I wouldn't touch a drop of the stuff. Somehow or other, though, they got some down me, and I guess they must have doctored a cup of cold coffee I had on the table alongside, for I felt as weak as water after it; and, under a show of giving me medicine, they gave me a big drink, and unused as I was to the thing, it made me as drunk as a fiddler, and I never knew anything until the next morning, when I woke up in the light tower, with a bottle sticking out of my pocket, and heard there had been a wreck."

"The dirty villains!" muttered Jock.

"I rushed outside, overcome with shame, and overheard Tim and Dirk talking about having put the light out, and thrown the blame on me, and I threatened to let out the whole business. The men swore like mad, and Tim struck me a blow on the head with a knife that stunned me, and when I came to I found they had set me afloat in an open boat. I felt kind of dazed, and I can't remember well what happened, but somehow recollect that an old, miserable-looking tramp, who used to come around once in a while, saw them strike me, and attacked them, and before they knew it they had killed him."

"Was he the man that was found?" asked Lem.

"I suppose so, but for a long time I didn't know anything, but lay hid in the lighthouse, thinking something dreadful was going to happen. I would be there for weeks and weeks, and never stir away, except to go out occasionally at night, or go prowling around up stairs for food. There would come an occasional lucid interval, and during these times I would hang around at night, where Tim was, and so learned the whole story of my supposed suicide. They thought that I was dead, and that it was my body that was buried in the churchyard. Privation, and the wound in my head, made me crazy, and when I was occasionally sound in my mind, I was afraid to show myself."

"How you must have suffered," said Maggie, sympathizingly.

"The wreckers got to be bolder and bolder, and the only thing I could think of was to baffle them, and if possible bring Tim Brace to justice. I frightened him once or twice by appearing to him suddenly, and once I threw down a false beacon he had planted on the cliff. Before that time I had balked him in several ways. One night I slammed the door in their faces, and another time I lit the lamps after he had put them out."

"I remember the time," said Lem, "and I was very much puzzled to account for it."

"I never knew how long a time it was that my mind was clouded, until after that blow upon the head given by Dirk which released the pressure upon my brain and brought me back to reason. It all seems like a frightful dream to me now, and I have no idea of the cunning I must have shown to keep out of sight and to supply myself with food. I

had a little boat and I used often to row out to the reef, never seeming to be afraid, for I imagined myself to be the Storm King; and many a fierce gale have I been in, when it would seem as if I should be swamped. At last I was followed by Lem and his friend, as I was getting in by the lower door, the entrance I always used, and thinking I could escape by the other one unseen, I ran up and came across the scamp setting fire to the house; I rushed upon him, and in the struggle which ensued received the blow which gave me back my senses. That is all I have to tell, and I hope I may never pass through such a terrible time again; and thank God that I have such a noble, true-hearted son as my boy here, 'Lighthouse Lem,' as you call him."

CHAPTER XIII.

DIRK RINGBOLT RETURNS TO HIS OLD TRICKS.

ONE tempestuous night about a week before Christmas, Lem sat alone in the rude shanty erected on the beach near Sharksfin Point, watching the temporary beacon that had been erected pending the erection of the new lighthouse, and seeing that it was supplied with combustibles, when he sauntered out to see how the weather was and to get a little fresh air.

Jock had gone back to Jersey to be married, and Lem was usually alone at night, the wreckers having entirely disappeared, and there being no danger in staying alone all night. Lem had a small cannon in his hut which he could discharge in case any assistance was needed from the town, and as he always slept during the day time he could easily keep awake at night, and generally had plenty of reading matter to keep him occupied, being well supplied with newspapers and books by pretty Maggie Thorne.

This night he felt nervous and restless, and buttoning his coat up to his throat, went out and walked up and down the beach, communing with his thoughts, and occasionally glancing up to see if the beacon needed replenishing.

On one of these trips he happened to look toward the cliff where Tim Brace's old shanty was, when he saw a bright light shining from the summit. He was astonished beyond words, and could not make out the meaning of the light, which seemed to grow brighter every minute.

He thought it too bright to be the shanty on fire, and knew that no one lived there at that time, and still the real significance of the light did not dawn upon him for some little while; and all the time the treacherous guide was shining over the water, and luring an unfortunate vessel to destruction.

"Great Heaven! I understand it now," cried Lem, as the true state of the case flashed with lightning-like speed through his mind. "It is a false beacon which some of those villains have placed there to mislead some vessel and dash her on the Camel's Back Ledge. Why did I not think of that before?"

Running swiftly into the shanty he dragged out the little cannon which was already loaded and primed, and pointing it toward the land, touched a flaming pine knot to the vent.

There was a puff, a bright flash and a quick, sharp report, which went echoing away over the hills, startling the good people of the village from slumber. The boy quickly reloaded, and again the report sounded out upon the air, causing considerable stir among the villagers, and making them wonder what could be the matter.

A third and fourth report caused them to spring to their feet, and as speedily as possible come hurrying down to the shore. The last report was louder than all the rest, and was not made by Lem's piece, but came from the region of the cliff; and immediately after a rocket went up.

Lem looked again and saw that the light on the cliff had disappeared, and with a choking sensation in his throat he dashed off toward the place with all the speed he

could muster, for he felt sure that there had been a shipwreck, and maybe he could be of assistance.

He reached the spot, and by the light of a rocket saw a noble vessel struggling amid the fierce waves, her bow being fastened between two ugly-looking rocks and her stern deep in the water, the billows washing over it at every surge of the angry sea.

Again and again sounded the gun from the vessel's side, and Lem could see that the brave sailors were trying to get out a boat; but being evidently ignorant of the coast, and the night being so wild, they had pulled but a few strokes when they ran high upon a jagged rock, and every single man was thrown out, and the chance of saving their lives was a slim one.

Lem uttered a groan, and just then hearing a step near him, turned quickly, and even in that dim light recognized the forbidding face of Dirk Ringbolt, the wrecker, distorted by a demon scowl.

"This is your work, Master Dirk!" said the lad, fiercely. "Will you never leave the devil's employment and turn an honest man?"

"Yes, when I gets paid better as der duyvel pays me!" growled Dirk. "Who was tol' you dis was mine work, eh?" he continued.

"I know it, you infernal scoundrel. Nobody else would do it, now that Tim Brace is dead."

"Tim Brace dead! Mein Gott, who tell you dot. I dinks you lie like de duyvil."

Lem heard the sound of rushing feet, and saw a number of flashing lights, and he shouted out at the top of his voice for the crowd to come that way, at the same time springing upon Dirk with such impetuosity as to bring him to the earth, where he lay sprawling and kicking, swearing alternately in Dutch and English, and aiming savage blows at Lem with a long, keen-bladed knife that he managed to draw from his belt.

Lem was on top of him, with one knee on his chest and one foot on his left arm, pressing it firmly against the hard rock on which the wrecker had fallen. Seizing Dirk's right wrist with his own right hand, and forcing it back close to his head, with his left hand he struck the man several smashing blows in the face, which was soon covered with blood.

"I'll draw the map of the whole Atlantic coast on your face, you thundering Dutchman, including all the rivers, bays, lakes, and mountains, if you don't keep quiet," said Lem, closing the man's right eye. "Keep that knife still or I'll turn it against you. You lit that devil's contrivance on the cliff?"

Dirk answered not a word, but struggled more fiercely to free himself, knowing that if he did not get away before the villagers arrived, he would not do so at all.

"Answer me truly, this minute, or I'll knock every tooth you've got down your lying throat," said Lem, fiercely, twisting the man's arm so that he was forced to drop the knife and utter a yell of pain.

"You vas broke my arm, you young duyvelkin!" howled Dirk, groaning and twisting, and doing everything in his power to get away, but all to no purpose.

"Yes, and I'll break your neck next if your don't answer me. Who lit that beacon? Speak quick, or I'll ram your own knife down your lying throat!"

"Oh, mein Gott! ach, der duyvil, dot vos mineself vot lit me dot lide, but dot vas a mishdake, und I vos sorry dot sheep vos wrecked himself. Now, bleese let me oop, Meester Lem, 'cause mine head vos broke."

"All right; get up," said Lem, releasing him, and Dirk sprang to his feet and attempted to make a dash for freedom, but instead ran right into the arms of the sheriff, who clapped a pair of handcuffs upon him quicker than a wink, and marched him off to the lockup at a double quick gait.

"So much for him," said Lem, as the man disappeared.

Then, snatching up a torch and waving it over his head, he cried aloud:

"See, yonder is where we are needed. Who has got a boat?"

"Here is one," shouted half a dozen brave fellows, "but who will dare go in it?"

"I will, for one!" shouted Lem, in a ringing voice, throwing off his coat. "Now, who will go with me?"

Not a soul answered him, for the waves were running dangerously high, and none dared to risk the attempt.

"Shove her off!" said Lem, nothing daunted. "I will go alone, if none dare accompany me; I do not fear death in a good cause!"

CHAPTER XIV.

LEM ENDEAVORS TO REMEDY THE EFFECT OF DIRK'S EVIL DEEDS.

AT these brave words half a dozen strong men rushed to the boat and jumped in, Lem standing in the bow.

"Now, then, shove her off," he said. "Oh, Jock Trimble were only here to help. You, Tom Oates, take the helm, you have a steady hand and know the rocks."

"All right, Lem," answered Tom, and as the men dipped their oars, he took the tiller and guided the boat toward the wrecked vessel, which was now fast threatening to break up.

"Don't dip too deep, boys," cautioned Lem, "and look out for crabs; pull a long stroke there, Johnny Scraggs; bend your backs now, boys; away with her; sheer off a little, Tom, or you'll give us a ducking; that's it, steady as you go, that's it."

The monstrous billows rushed upon them with a tremendous hissing and bubbling, and dashed the salt spray into the men's faces; but they had all been born on the coast, and had been reared to a life of hardship and danger; their muscles were as hard as steel, and as they laid back upon their oars, the boat shot ahead like an arrow, cleaving the smaller waves and bounding over the heavier ones like a thing of life.

The distance to the vessel was not great, but there were treacherous shoals to be passed, great jagged rocks to be rounded, against any one of which they were likely to be dashed; and had it not been for the sake of saving so many lives, none would have thought of venturing out in such a storm.

More than once a fierce billow was on the point of driving them upon the rocks, when Lem would call to Tom to head now this way and now that, and the danger would be averted by a hair's breadth.

The men on the vessel saw them coming, fires having been lighted at many points along the beach, which was crowded with men, women and children, and they called to them to make haste, for the time was short and another huge wave would dash them to pieces.

The waves were rolling over the stern every minute, it having settled lower in the water, and all hands were crowded forward, waiting anxiously for the arrival of their rescuers.

At last, after a tedious pull the vessel is reached, and the men begin to crowd into the boat, threatening to swamp it, and Lem bids the rowers to pull away and let no more in, or they will all be lost.

"Throw me the strongest line you have," he shouts, "and we will soon fix you up something that you can cross to land upon; I can take no more in, or our trip will have been of no avail. Now then, are you ready?"

"Ay—ay!" shouts a man, and a line is thrown to Lem, who catches it and makes it fast, bidding the men on the ship to make fast a hawser to it and he will tow it to shore, fasten it firmly to the rocks and slide a boatswain's chair over to them.

Then the return trip is made, and although hard push-

ed for it, the men arrive in safety on the beach, where they are quickly cared for by the hospitable villagers.

Without a word, Lem, knowing that the men are too exhausted to make another trip, plunged into the sea, and by the aid of the line stretched from ship to shore, makes his way with much difficulty to the vessel, and by his firm courage and inspiring words assists many to make their way to land.

He sees an old man on the ship who is too feeble to make the attempt, and who has been neglected in the general confusion; and going to him tells him that he need not fear, for he will save him if he should lose his own life by it.

There were but three or four men remaining on the vessel by this time, one of these being the mate, the captain having been lost in the first boat, and Lem called upon them to launch the good boat remaining, and he would steer it to shore.

"My box—my box!" shouted the old man, "I cannot leave that, I would rather die than lose that."

"Where is it?"

"Here, on the deck. I could carry it no further than this. Put it in the boat for me; don't drop it, for it is very valuable."

"Lend me a hand here, men," shouted Lem, raising one end of the box, which was not very heavy. "Now, then, put her in the boat before you lower; there is time enough; I wonder any man would think of treasures at such a time."

"You will never regret my having thought of it," returned the old man, in a snarling tone, as he saw the box safely deposited in the boat.

"Lower away," said Lem, "and look lively now; jump in, old gentleman; bother your spectacles, I'll buy you a new pair when we get safe to shore, if we ever do. There you are, all in a heap; never mind that, we'll straighten you out by-and-by. Pull away, now, bullies! I hear her beginning to split!"

Away they pulled for dear life, and they had not left the ship three boats' lengths behind when there came a wave more monstrous than all the rest, and the ship was broken in two and the fragments scattered far and wide.

CHAPTER XV.

WHAT THE QUEER OLD GENTLEMAN DID.

MORE than once did it seem to the anxious watchers on the shore that the boat must certainly be swamped, and once when it was lost to sight behind a towering wave a cry of despair went up from every throat; and when at the next moment the watch-fires showed Lem and the strange sailors still safe and sound, a shout went up that seemed to shake the very cliffs; and women wept and laughed simultaneously, while the children danced and shouted, and the men nearly split their throats with their hearty cheers.

Lem was beloved by everyone in that vast crowd, for the people from miles around had gathered on the beach; and if the brave boy had perished it would have gone hard with Dirk Ringbolt, for they would have torn down the flimsy jail, dragged him out and strung him up on the nearest limb.

Nearer and nearer came the boat, and soon she had passed the worst places; and rushing breast deep into the water, a score of sturdy men seized her and carried her to land, while Lem was raised upon the shoulders of Tom Oates, and the sound of the cheering was heard far above the terrible roar of the waves and the din of the storm.

The ship, of course, was doomed, and nothing could be done but to save such parts of her cargo as came to shore, a patrol being established to see that nothing was stolen.

Lem looked around for the queer old man and his mysterious box, but both had disappeared, and nobody seemed to know what had become of them. The crowd gradually dispersed, and along towards morning Lem sought his rude

bunk in the shanty to get a few hours of much-needed sleep; and being undisturbed at that early hour, he was not long in falling into a heavy slumber, from which he did not awake until noon.

The news of the wreck had spread far and wide, and Dirk's participation in it was rewarded with the most heart-felt indignation. Indeed, so many threats were made against his life that the sheriff had to put a double guard around the jail to prevent the angry mob from putting their threats into execution.

A good deal of the cargo was saved, but directions came from the owners that it was to be divided around among the poor people of the village; and many an honest workman received his winter supply of pork, butter, sugar, molasses and other necessities, and many were the hearts made glad thereby, and the thanks bestowed upon the generous owners were uttered from the very depths of the heart.

In addition to that, it was announced that if the crew which had accompanied Lem on his first trip to the vessel would present themselves at Deacon Thorne's as soon as possible after the announcement, each man would be given one hundred dollars in money and an order for a new suit of clothes.

Lem, hearing of this, sent a list of the names to the deacon, fearing that some of the men would feel too proud to accept a present for having done their duty, and not wishing that any of them should be missed.

The next day word was sent to him that the deacon wanted to see him, and he accordingly made all haste to accommodate the worthy man; and upon entering the sitting-room, he found Maggie and her father waiting to receive him, and in a corner by himself, the queer old man that he had saved from the wreck.

"I didn't think you would do us an unkindness, Lem," said the deacon, winking at Maggie, "and I am very sorry that, after your brave conduct of the other night, you should so far forget yourself as to wish to deprive one of our best friends of what was justly due him."

"What do you mean, Deacon Thorne?" asked Lem, in surprise. "I don't understand you. What have I done?"

"You didn't make out that list of the crew correctly."

"Why, yes, I did," said Lem. "Let me see—there was Tom Oates, Johnny Scraggs, the two Thompsons—Joe and Dick—Bill Fowler, and myself; that's all there were. Who did I leave out? Dan Briggs would have gone, but there was no oar for him. I suppose he deserves some credit, for the will was not wanting."

"Ha-ha, Lem, my boy!" laughed the good deacon, while Maggie smiled. "You've got it right now; but you left the captain of the crew out the first time."

"The captain?"

"Yes, you omitted yourself; and we did not think it fair that you should cheat yourself out of what belonged to you. The bill read: 'One hundred dollars to each of the men in the boat,' and certainly you were one."

"Oh, I didn't expect to be paid for it," answered Lem, blushing. "It is right that the men should have it, because they all have families depending on them, and need all they can get."

"So do you, my boy, if you are going to take Maggie from me some day," and the deacon laughed loudly. "Never mind me, my lad; you won't get a penniless bride, but the men say that if you don't take your share of the money, they won't take theirs."

"Then I'll take it," said Lem, "and give it around among the rest—twenty dollars apiece. I suppose I can do what I like with my own, after I have drawn it?"

"Of course—of course, young man," said the old gentleman, speaking for the first time, and coming forward he put five gold double eagles into Lem's hand. "I don't believe they'll let you do that, though," he continued, "for I told 'em not to. That's for going out to the vessel. Now there's another job to be paid for, the taking

of the ship's boat to land. I told you that you would not regret my thinking of my box, and so you won't."

"Don't mention it I beg," said Lem, nervously. "I was very rude to speak as I did."

"No, you weren't, my young man, and I don't find any fault. That box contained a large part of my fortune, though not the whole, by any means, and I have taken care to place a good sum to your credit in the bank, for since I have found out what an interest my grandniece here, takes in your welfare, I have become more interested in it myself."

"Your grandniece?" said Lem, astonished.

"Yes, Lem," said Maggie, smiling, "this is Mr. Jonathan Dunham Thorne, father's uncle, and my grand-uncle. You didn't know what a favor you were doing us when you saved his life, and strong box," she added, mischievously.

"I would have done it all the same," answered Lem.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE KEEPER OF THE NEW LIGHTHOUSE.

LEM could not learn how large the sum was that had been placed to his credit, but he knew it must be considerable, for he ascertained that the old gentleman was immensely rich, and that he had owned the ship on which he was a passenger at the time of the wreck.

Dirk was tried at the next session of the court, and was sent to state prison for twenty years, with hard labor, his offense not being the first of the kind that he had committed, and the feeling of the people being entirely against him.

He pleaded hard for a lighter sentence, but it was denied him, and he was led from the court cursing like a madman. He served five years of his term, and then one morning he was found dead in his cell, having strangled himself with his neckerchief.

Lem ascertained after the wreck that Jim Brace, the second eldest son of the wrecker, had been cabin-boy on the vessel, and that in his eagerness to save himself ahead of anyone else, he had been drowned in very sight of the place where his father had committed so many offenses against God and man.

It was subsequently learned that of the wrecker's other two sons, the oldest was in a reform school and the youngest had fallen off a roof while committing a burglary, and had been killed.

Ham and Toby, after serving out their sentences, disappeared, and were never heard from again; and nobody missed them except the farmers whose hen-roosts Ham had frequently robbed, and they did not feel sorry by any means.

The old gentleman remained with the deacon's family all that winter, and in the spring he took great interest in the project of building a new lighthouse on Sharkfin Point, and by his efforts the work was undertaken sooner than it would have been otherwise.

It was made more commodious than the other one, and was much handsomer. There were more living rooms in it, and they were fitted up with an eye to comfort and elegance that one would scarcely expect to see in a lighthouse.

When asked why this was, the old gentleman would smile and say:

"Well, you see, the new keeper is going to bring his wife here, and wants to have everything just about right."

"The new keeper? Will there be a new one?" he would be asked.

"Certainly—certainly, it's a new house, isn't it?"

"Why, yes, of course it is."

"Well, then, the keeper will be new. He must be new to the house mustn't he, for won't the house be new, to him?"

It took quite a long time to finish the house, and furnish

it with all the newest contrivances in lights, life-saving apparatus, boats, and other necessary articles, and considerably more than a year was occupied in the building and furnishing; but when it was all ready for the new keeper to move in, not a more elegantly appointed lighthouse could be found for many hundred miles.

There were sleeping rooms, parlor, kitchen, dining and sitting rooms, iron balconies around the windows, with fancy awnings over them for summer use, and there was not a thing which was needed in a well appointed house that was wanting. Furnaces, hot and cold water, bath rooms, storehouse, in short, everything needful was supplied.

When everything was ready, there was a wedding in the village to which everybody was invited, the principals being Maggie Thorne and Lemuel Loring, the queer old gentleman giving away the bride, and at the party in the evening, dancing opposite to Lem's father while the bride and

groom led the first set. Lem took his young bride to the lighthouse with him, and she was delighted at her quarters. Of course she had known all along that such was to be the arrangement, but she had never imagined that she would like it so well.

Many years have passed away since then, and the keeper of the new lighthouse is a man of middle age. The nursery in one corner of the now old building rings with the shouts of many children, and one would hardly suppose that matronly-looking lady to be pretty Maggie Thorne of old times; but it is, and she is as lovable as ever.

Lem's father and Maggie's granduncle are both dead, and the old folks, the deacon and his wife, are getting well along in years. Lem and Maggie will have all the property in time, and they will thus be enabled to increase their facilities for doing good, which are already large, and thus cause the poor of the village to more than ever bless the good people of Sharksfin Point Lighthouse.

[THE END.]

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